THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) to (d). A total of 120 outbound flights and 113 inbound flights were operated from Bangalore, Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta and Madras to Saudi Arabia and back for transportation of Haj Pilgrims during Haj, 1996.

The Haj Pilgrim fare for the round trip was fixed by the Government at Rs19,640.00 which includes a subsidy of Rs.7640 per Haj pilgrim.

[English]

Sales Tax/Corporate Tax

2447. SHRI K. PRADHANI : Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Super Bazar Consumer Society was asked to pay Rs.90.00 lakh as sales tax/corporate tax which has been outstanding for the last three years;

(b) if so, the details thereof, year-wise;

(c) the taxable earning of the Super Bazar during the last three years, year-wise;

(d) the demand made by the sales tax authority; and

(e) the stage at which dispute stands at present?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) and (b). It has been reported by the Super Bazar Delhi that assessment of sales tax of Super Bazar has been completed upto 1992-93 and income tax upto1993-94. It has also been reported that they do not have any pending tax liabilities.

(c) It has been reported by the Super Bazar, that they do not have taxable earnings.

(d) It has been reported by the Super Bazar that during the last three years they have paid sales tax as detailed below and they have not received any demand from the Sales Tax Authorities :-

Year	Sales Tax paid (Rs. in lakhs)
1992-93	150.18
1993-94	182.24
1994-95	215.60

(e) Does not arise.

Airport in Kerala

2448. SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the new Airport being constructed in Kerala has suffered a set back;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the action being taken to speed-up the construction?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c). Does not arise.

[Translation]

Development of Backward Classes

2449. SHRI O.P. JINDAL : Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) the steps taken by the Government for the development of backward classes in comparison to SCs/STs during the Eighth Five Year Plan;

(b) whether the Government propose to give representation to backward classes in Parliament and State Legislature like SCs/STs; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA) : (a) The following steps have been taken by the Government for the development of backward classes :-

(i) As in the case of SC/STs, 27% reservation is provided to OBCs in Civil Posts and Services under the Government of India in direct recruitment.

(ii) OBC candidates are given the benefit of relaxed standard in respect of written examination and interviews as in the case of SC/ST candidates.

(iii) The upper age limit for OBC candidates in direct recruitment has been increased by 3 years as against 5 years given to SC/ST candidates.

(iv) The number of attempts for OBC candidates who are otherwise eligible has been increased to 7 in respect of Civil Services examinations.

(v) As in the case of SC/ST a Commission viz. National Commission for Backward Classes has been set up under the NCBC Act, 1993.

(vi) As in the case of SC/ST, a financial Corporation, viz. Naitonal Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation (NBCFDC) has been set up the promote economic activities for the benefit of backward classes and to assist the poorer sections of these classes in skill development and self-employment ventures.